

## WILLIAM HELMER

Last rites for William Helmer, the oldest employee of the Potlatch Forests, Inc. took place in Moscow on Saturday, October 27th, with the Rev. E. P. Goulder officiating and B.P.O.E. No. 185 giving the Elks ritual at the graveside.

Mr. Helmer was born in Quebec, Canada, where he developed a deep affection for the White Pine timber of his native province. After receiving his early schooling, he branched out as a "land looker" or "timber cruiser". Sensing the development in the lumber industry in the lake states, he came to Stillwater, Minnesota in 1882 where he became associated with C.N. Nelson, one of the largest Pine operators of the early days. He loved the big outdoors and the woods and developed an almost uncanny instinct for accurate timber estimating.

At the turn of the century, when William Deary was selected by Wisconsin and Minnesota interests to consolidate a large operating block of White Pine timber in northern Idaho, he picked William Helmer to accompany him. Relying absolutely on his ability, purchase was made of a huge timber block as the nucleus of the operating unit of the Potlatch Lumber Company.

In those days, very few trails and roads existed in northern Idaho and he and his compassman were frequently out months at a stretch packing their meagre outfits on their backs over the uncharted areas of timber land, sleeping where darkness overtook them.

To the original timber block purchased by Mr. Deary, the holdings of the company were increased over a period of years to the point where many millions dollars were invested in timber on the judgment and integrity of one man--William Helmer.

After the mill was constructed at Potlatch in 1905 and operations



were well under way, it was William Helmer who laid out the logging spurs and located the camp sites - this, in addition to his duties as cruiser. For some time prior to his retirement about 1931 he was called on only as a consultant and to supervise the estimating of timber to be purchased by the Company.

As the years went by, his love for the woods deepened and he continued to reside in Idaho, nurturing the hope that he might live out his days in the shadows of the Pines, which had become so much a part of him. Those who knew "Bill" and have been intimately associated with him over the years have loved him for his fine character, his modesty, his outstanding ability, and deep rooted loyalty to his company and his many friends.

TRULY, THE "PINES OF THE WEST" MUST IMPART SOME  
OF THEIR MAJESTIC QUALITIES TO PRODUCE MEN OF  
SUCH SPLENDID CHARACTER AS WILLIAM HELMER.

(Suggest blocked in heavy type or capitalized)  
(Also, there should be in the Co.files in Lewiston  
a cut of picture that was in issue of May 1937 of  
Family Tree, which many say is the best picture  
of Mr. Helmer)

Louise Nygaard,  
Potlatch Unit Correspondent

11/5/51